Key Nutrients and Your Health

The Nutrition Facts Label can help you learn about and monitor the nutrient content of many foods in your diet.

The following pages include information about key nutrients:

- **To Get More Of**
- **To Get Less Of**
- **To Monitor**

TIP Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet – your Daily Value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Check your calorie needs at http://www.choosemyplate.gov.

Nutrients to Get More Of

Dietary fiber, calcium, and iron are considered "nutrients of public health concern" because low intakes are associated with potential health risks.

Dietary Fiber

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 package (272g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 300	Calories from Fat 45
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**8%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**8%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 55g	**18%**
Dietary Fiber 6g	**24%**
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Diets higher in dietary fiber can **reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease**. Dietary fiber interferes with the absorption of dietary fat and cholesterol, which can help lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol levels in the blood.

Dietary fiber is a type of carbohydrate found in plant foods that cannot be readily digested.

Dietary fiber slows the rate at which carbohydrates and other nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream. This can **help control the level of blood glucose** (often referred to as blood sugar) by preventing rapid rises in blood glucose following a meal.

Dietary fiber also **helps prevent constipation** and provides a feeling of fullness, which may help you eat less and stay satisfied longer.

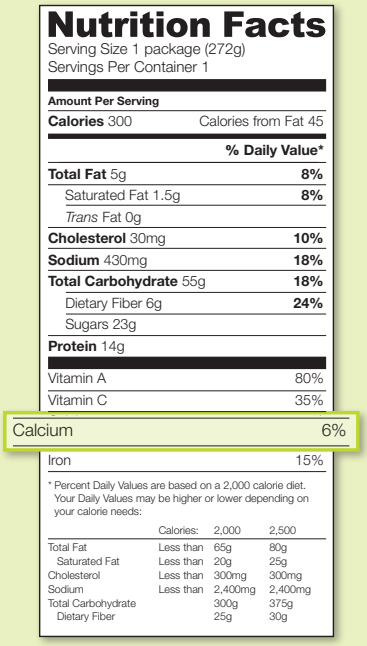
Food Sources:

- Beans and peas
- Fruits
- Oats (such as oat bran and oatmeal)
- Nuts and seeds
- Vegetables
- Wheat bran
- Whole grain foods (such as brown rice and whole grain breads, cereals, and pasta)

Recommendation: Consume a variety of foods that are good sources of dietary fiber and consume **at least half of total grains as whole grains** and limit the intake of refined grains. The Daily Value for dietary fiber is 25 grams (g) per day. Try to get **100% DV** of dietary fiber on most days.

Key Nutrients and Your Health

Calcium



Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 package (272g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving

Calories 300	Calories from Fat 45
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**8%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**8%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 55g	**18%**
Dietary Fiber 6g	**24%**
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Diets lower in calcium can **increase the risk of developing osteoporosis** (weak and brittle bones) that can result in bone fractures.

Calcium is a mineral and is important for optimal bone health. It is also important for many body processes, such as blood clotting, hormone secretion, muscle contraction, and nervous system function.

Food Sources:

- Almond, rice, coconut, and hemp milks
- Canned seafood with bones (such as salmon and sardines)
- Dairy products
- Fortified cereals, juice, and soy beverages (soymilk)
- Green vegetables (such as spinach, kale, broccoli, turnip greens)
- Tofu (made with calcium sulfate)

Vitamin D's Role

Vitamin D **helps your body absorb calcium**. Vitamin D is found in many foods and is also produced by the body when your skin is exposed to sunlight.

Vitamin D is also important for blood pressure regulation, hormone production, and immune and nervous system function.

The Daily Value for vitamin D is 400 International Units (IU) per day.

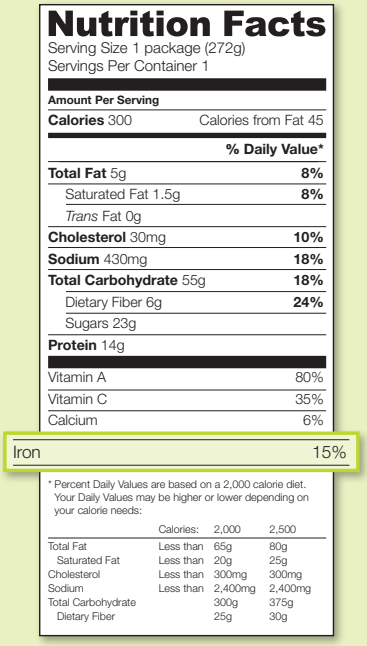
Vitamin D is not mandatory on the Nutrition Facts Label.

Food Sources:

- Eggs
- Fish (such as herring, mackerel, salmon, trout, and tuna)
- Fish liver oil
- Fortified foods (such as cereals, dairy products, margarine, orange juice, and soy beverages [soymilk])

Recommendation: Consume a variety of foods that are good sources of calcium. The Daily Value for calcium is 1,000 milligrams (mg) per day. Try to get **100% DV** of calcium on most days.

Iron



Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 package (272g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving

Calories 300	Calories from Fat 45
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**8%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**8%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 55g	**18%**
Dietary Fiber 6g	**24%**
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Diets lower in iron can **increase the risk of anemia**, a deficiency of red blood cells or of hemoglobin in the blood, which results in fatigue and weakness.

Iron is a mineral and is important for red blood cell formation. It is also important for many body processes, such as growth and development, immune function, reproduction, and wound healing.

Food Sources:

- Beans and peas
- Dark green vegetables
- Meats
- Poultry
- Prunes and prune juice
- Raisins
- Seafood
- Whole grain, enriched, and fortified cereals and breads

Vitamin C's Role

Vitamin C **helps your body absorb iron**.

The Daily Value for vitamin C is 60 milligrams (mg) per day.

Vitamin C is required to be listed on the Nutrition Facts Label.

Food Sources:

- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cantaloupe
- Citrus fruits and juices (such as oranges and grapefruit)
- Kiwifruit
- Peppers
- Strawberries
- Tomatoes and tomato juice

Recommendation: Consume a variety of foods that are good sources of iron, especially young children, pregnant women, and women capable of becoming pregnant. The Daily Value for iron is 18 milligrams (mg) per day. Try to get **100% DV** of iron on most days.

Nutrients to Get Less Of

Healthy dietary choices can help you manage or reduce your risk of developing preventable chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

Sodium

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 package (272g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 300	Calories from Fat 45
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**8%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**8%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 55g	**18%**
Dietary Fiber 6g	**24%**
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Diets higher in sodium can **increase the risk of developing high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease**.

Sodium is a mineral and is one of the chemical elements found in salt. The words "salt" and "sodium" are often used interchangeably, but they do not mean the same thing.

Ingredient List

Look for sources of sodium on the ingredient list on a food package. Some examples of ingredients that contain sodium are: saline, sodium benzoate, sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), sodium chloride (salt), sodium nitrite, and monosodium glutamate (MSG).

Food Sources

- Breads and rolls
- Cheese (natural and processed)
- Cold cuts and cured meats (such as deli and packaged ham and turkey)
- Mixed meat dishes (such as beef stew, chili, and meat loaf)
- Mixed pasta dishes (such as lasagna, pasta salad, and spaghetti with meat sauce)
- Pizza
- Poultry (fresh and processed)
- Sandwiches (such as hamburgers, hot dogs, and submarine sandwiches)
- Savory snacks (such as chips, crackers, popcorn, and pretzels)
- Soups

Potassium's Role

Sodium and potassium both affect blood pressure, and eating foods higher in potassium can **help lower blood pressure** by reducing the adverse effects of sodium on blood pressure.

Potassium is a nutrient of concern for most Americans.

The Daily Value for potassium is 3,500 milligrams (mg) per day.

Potassium is not mandatory on the Nutrition Facts Label.

Food Sources

- Bananas
- Beet greens
- Juices (such as carrot, orange, pomegranate, and prune)
- Potatoes
- Spinach
- Sweet potatoes
- Tomatoes and tomato products
- White beans
- Yogurt (non-fat and low-fat)

Recommendation: Limit sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg per day (that's equal to about 1 teaspoon of salt!) or 1,500 mg per day for adults with hypertension and prehypertension. The Daily Value for sodium is less than 2,400 milligrams (mg) per day. Try to get less than **100% DV** of sodium each day.

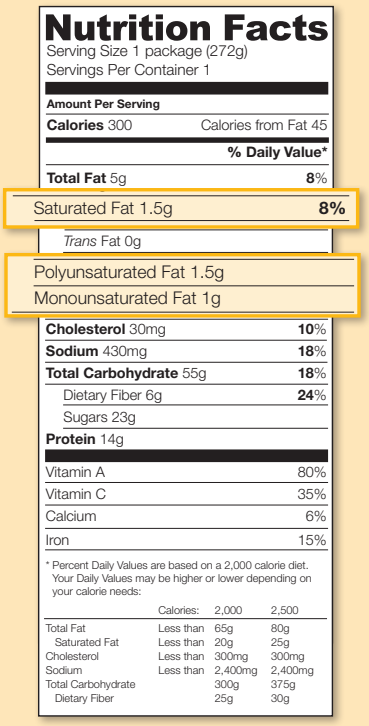
Understanding Cardiovascular Disease and Hypertension

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) includes a range of diseases affecting the heart and blood vessels (arteries, capillaries, and veins) that can lead to heart attack, chest pain (angina), or stroke. CVD is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the United States, accounting for approximately 1 in 3 deaths each year.

Hypertension (also known as high blood pressure) is a condition in which blood pressure remains elevated over time. Hypertension makes the heart work too hard, and the high force of the blood flow can harm arteries and organs, such as the heart, kidneys, brain, and eyes. Uncontrolled hypertension can lead to CVD (including heart attack, heart failure, and stroke), kidney disease, and blindness. Approximately 56% of adults in the United States have either hypertension or *prehypertension* (blood pressure that is higher than normal, but not high enough to be defined as hypertension).

Healthy dietary choices can help you manage or reduce your risk of developing preventable chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

Saturated Fat



Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 package (272g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 300	Calories from Fat 45
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**8%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**8%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 1g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 55g	**18%**
Dietary Fiber 6g	**24%**
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Diets higher in saturated fat can **increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease**. Saturated fat can raise the levels of total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol in the blood.

Saturated fat is a type of fat found in higher proportions in *animal products* and is usually *solid at room temperature*. The human body makes more saturated fat than it needs — so it is not necessary to get saturated fat from food.

Ingredient List

Look for sources of saturated fat on the ingredient list on a food package. Some examples of ingredients that contain saturated fat are: beef fat (tallow and suet), butter, chicken fat, cream, pork fat (lard), shortening, and tropical plant oils (such as coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil).

Food Sources:

- Beef fat (tallow and suet)
- Chicken fat, and pork fat (lard)
- Cream and milk (whole and 2% milk)
- Dairy products (such as butter and regular/full-fat cheese and cream cheese)
- Dairy desserts (such as ice cream, other frozen desserts, and puddings)
- Grain-based desserts (such as brownies, cakes, cookies, doughnuts, pastries, pies, and sweet rolls)
- Fast food
- Meats and poultry
- Nuts
- Processed meats and poultry products (such as bacon, hot dogs, jerky, luncheon meats, and sausages
- Tropical plant oils (such as coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils)
- Savory snacks (such as chips, crackers, and microwave popcorn)
- Sweets (such as chocolate candies),
- Vegetable shortening and stick margarine

Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated Fat's Role

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are found in higher proportions in *plants and seafood* and are usually *liquid at room temperature*. **When eaten in place of saturated fat, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats can reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease**.

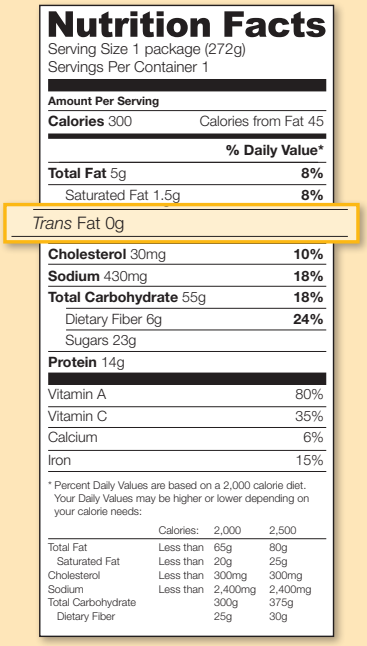
Monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat are not mandatory on the Nutrition Facts Label.

Food Sources

- Avocados
- Fish (such as herring, mackerel, salmon, trout, and tuna)
- Mayonnaise and oil-based salad dressings
- Nuts (such as almonds, peanuts, and walnuts
- Olives
- Seeds (such as pumpkin, sesame, and sunflower seeds)
- Soft margarine (liquid, spray, and tub)
- Vegetable oils (such as canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower oils, and soybean)

Recommendation: Consume less than 10% of calories per day from saturated fat by *replacing* saturated fat with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats while staying within recommended limits for calories and total dietary fat. The Daily Value for saturated fat is less than 20 grams (g) per day. Try to get less than **100% DV** of saturated fat each day.

Trans Fat



Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 package (272g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving

Calories 300	Calories from Fat 45
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**8%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**8%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 55g	**18%**
Dietary Fiber 6g	**24%**
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Diets higher in *trans* fat **increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease**. *Trans* fat increases the level of low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol and decreases the level of high-density lipoprotein (HDL or "good") cholesterol in the blood.

Trans fat is a type of fat primarily formed artificially during a process called "partial hydrogenation," in which hydrogen is added to liquid vegetable oil to make it more solid.

Ingredient List

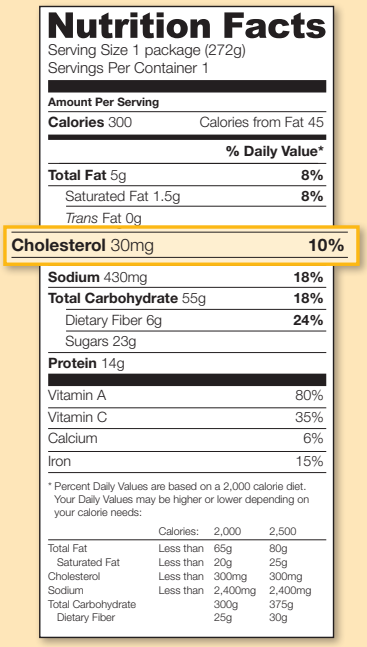
Look for partially hydrogenated oils on the ingredient list on a food package.

Food Sources

- Coffee creamer
- Fast food
- Frozen pizza
- Grain-based desserts (such as cakes, cookies, and frozen pies)
- Ready-to-use frostings
- Refrigerated dough products (such as biscuits and cinnamon rolls)
- Savory snacks (such as crackers and microwave popcorn)
- Vegetable shortening and stick margarine

Recommendation: Keep the intake of *trans* fat as low as possible by limiting foods containing partially hydrogenated oils (a source of artificial *trans* fat). *Trans* fat has no %DV, so use grams (g) as a guide.

Cholesterol



Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 package (272g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving

Calories 300	Calories from Fat 45
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**8%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**8%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 55g	**18%**
Dietary Fiber 6g	**24%**
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Many foods that are higher in dietary cholesterol are generally higher in saturated fat, which can increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Dietary cholesterol is only found in foods of *animal origin*.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance produced primarily by the liver in both humans and animals. The human body makes more cholesterol than it needs — so it is not necessary to get cholesterol from food.

Food Sources

- Beef fat (tallow and suet)
- Chicken fat, and pork fat (lard)
- Cream and milk (whole and 2% milk)
- Dairy products (such as butter and regular/full-fat cheese, cream cheese, and ice cream)
- Egg yolks
- Meats and poultry
- Processed meat and poultry products (such as bacon, hot dogs, jerky, luncheon meats, and sausages)
- Shellfish (such as shrimp and lobster)

Recommendation: Keep the intake of dietary cholesterol as low as possible. The Daily Value for cholesterol is less than 300 milligrams (mg) per day. Try to get less than **100% DV** of cholesterol each day.

Nutrient to Monitor

Sugars

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 package (272g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving

Calories 300	Calories from Fat 45
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**8%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**8%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	**10%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 55g	**18%**
Dietary Fiber 6g	**24%**
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Diets lower in added sugars and higher in nutritious foods and beverages can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Sugars are a major source of daily calories for many people and can **increase the risk of developing cavities**.

Ingredient List

Look for added sugars on the ingredient list on a food package. Some examples are: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose sweetener, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, maple syrup, molasses, pancake syrup, raw sugar, sucrose, trehalose, and turbinado sugar.

Food Sources

Sugars are found *naturally* in many foods and beverages and are also *added* to foods and beverages for taste, texture, and preservation.

Naturally occurring sugars are found in a variety of foods, including:

- Fruit (fresh, frozen, dried, and canned in 100% fruit juice)
- 100% fruit and vegetable juice
- Dairy products
- Vegetables

Added sugars are often found in foods low in other nutrients, including:

- Grain-based desserts (such as brownies, cakes, cookies, doughnuts, pastries, pies, and sweet rolls)
- Dairy desserts (such as ice cream, other frozen desserts, and puddings)
- Sweets (such as candies, jams, sweet toppings, and syrups)
- Sugar-sweetened beverages (such as energy drinks, flavored waters, fruit drinks, soft drinks, and sports drinks, and sweetened coffee and tea)

Recommendation: Consume less than 10% of calories per day from *added* sugars. Many foods and beverages that contain added sugars also tend to be high in calories and provide few or no important nutrients or dietary fiber. Sugars have no %DV, so use grams (g) as a guide.

Notes: